

***TOWN OF WEBSTER, NEW YORK***

***PLANNING BOARD  
DESIGN GUIDELINES***

***Prepared by***

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**1. ADOPTION BY THE PLANNING BOARD**

The following design guidelines are hereby adopted by the Town of Webster, New York Planning Board for the purpose of improving the quality of life within the Town, by enhancing the design and aesthetic character of Commercial, Industrial and Multiple Housing developments, where applicable.

**2. AUTHORITY**

These guidelines are established under the Planning Board's site plan review powers. The Planning Board reserves the right to modify, waive or alter requirements depending on the scope, location or nature of the proposed development. It is the Board's intent to be consistent in applying the standards of these guidelines throughout the Town.

**3. OVERALL DESIGN OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of these Design Guidelines is to improve the quality of life throughout the Town and its neighborhoods by enhancing the aesthetic and pedestrian character of development achieved as a result of the Site Plan Review Process.

It is the Board's Intent to:

- a) foster attractive building and site designs with enduring aesthetic appeal.
- b) foster attractive, inviting, pedestrian-friendly designs that are likely to evoke a positive and strong "sense of place."
- c) foster designs that have continuity with the better design traditions and values of the community.
- d) foster designs which are likely to evoke feelings of pride in one's community.
- e) foster the preservation and enhancement of significant views and characteristics of the natural landscape including important topographic, watercourse and viewscape features.
- f) foster the aesthetic appeal of spaces around and between buildings for the visual enjoyment of pedestrians.
- g) promote and enhance the interconnection of on-site pedestrian walkways with off-site pedestrian access ways.
- h) encourage opportunities to allow pedestrian accessibility to areas with strong natural features such as meadows, wooded areas, wetlands and watercourses, by the attainment of public rights-of-way for public access.
- i) promote multi-modal travel between adjacent commercial properties.
- j) and, to seek aesthetic continuity on contiguous parcels which can be viewed from public right-of-ways.

**4. RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS**

It is expected that the design of buildings and sites be undertaken by design professionals who are knowledgeable of, and sensitive to, surrounding neighborhoods, surrounding landscape, views and other positive aesthetic characteristics of the community.

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Site and building designs are expected to have cohesive, appealing stand-alone design qualities as well having design scale and design continuity that allows them to compliment and enhance the better design traditions of surrounding neighborhood communities.

The Planning Board has identified terms such as "inviting," "pedestrian scale" and "pedestrian friendly" design characteristics as positive project design attributes, that it expects, will foster aesthetic compatibility with area neighborhoods. These attributes should be taken into account by design professionals when creating the character of building forms, roof lines, features, materials, articulation of building forms, building details, coordination of building materials, site materials, landscaping, topography, colors, textures, lighting and signage.

## **5. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS**

The Board expects that building design professionals will be sensitive to the residential character of neighborhoods near commercial districts and design buildings and site improvements that are attractive and appropriate.

The Board and its consultants will review the scale and design character of proposed building designs and request design treatments that are appealing to, and in scale with, pedestrian neighborhoods. Such considerations shall include, but not limited to, the following:

### ***a) Facades, Roof Forms and Exterior Walls***

Facades, roof lines and exterior walls are expected to have three dimensional variation to provide interest and character. Building design techniques should include: organizing larger building masses into a series of smaller masses or design components that feature offsets in exterior walls, providing accent forms, and variations in roof lines or heights that create shadows and providing off-sets that enhance the over-all building design. The areas and patterns of glazing used in facades are expected to be interesting and compatible with the 3-dimensional design character of the building. Designs for large unarticulated "box" buildings and buildings with monotonous visually unattractive facades are to be avoided.

Exterior walls above grade that are attached to buildings should appear to be integral to the design of the building, i.e. walls attached to brick building surfaces should be brick. Other above grade screening walls, such as dumpster enclosures or transformer screen walls, should match materials and colors used in the building facade.

### ***b) Building Entrances***

Building entrances should be interesting, attractive, obvious, in scale with the building facade and have weather cover. At larger commercial buildings, the Board may request that individual commercial tenants have separate entrances.

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c) ***Screening of Equipment***

Rooftop equipment screening shall appear to be integral with the building design. Parapet walls or sloped roof forms, integral to the design of the building, are preferred. Other equipment located at grade, such as compactors, dumpsters, HVAC equipment, electrical transformers and switchgear located on site shall be totally screened from public view in a manner approved by the Board. Screening materials and design should be attractive and compatible with the building and overall landscape designs.

d) ***Color and Material of Primary Building Components***

The Board has a preference for the use of brick and clear glass as primary façade materials. Alternative materials may be appropriate if they serve to be more appropriate to adjacent residential communities. Where other materials are being proposed, the board may ask that brick be incorporated as a major component. The use of reflective glass, split face concrete masonry units or metal siding is discouraged. Façade material colors should be selected to avoid being dreary and to avoid being excessively bold. Brightly colored or high contrast accent features located on building facades that are primarily attention getting should be avoided.

e) ***Building Canopies and Canopy Lighting***

The board may allow back lighted canopies up to 8 ft. wide and 6 ft. in height. Back-lighting translucent canopies is not recommended. Canopy colors, excluding signage graphics, should not be bright attention-getting colors. At gas station canopies lighting fixtures, lamps or lenses may not project below canopy soffits. The underside of gas station canopy soffits shall be limited to a maximum of 14 ft. above the pavement of the driving surface below the canopy. This measurement may not be taken from the top of the dispensing island curb. The light intensity under gas station canopies shall not exceed 100 foot candles at a height of 36 inches above drive lane pavement directly under the canopy.

f) ***Commercial Building-Prototype Designs***

Standard commercial prototype building designs will be considered if they are consistent in design, scale, material, color and detail with the design intent of these guidelines. The Board reserves the right, however, to require substantial design alterations to standard corporate or commercial prototype building designs that it deems to be inconsistent with the design guidelines or is otherwise inappropriate to the general aesthetic character of the neighborhood or area within which the site is located.

g) ***Exterior Building Lighting***

Exterior building lighting should be similar in color to the color of site lighting. All building mounted exterior light fixtures must be shown on building

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elevations and must be approved by the Board for design, location and fixture color. All building mounted lighting and site lighting shall be shielded from adjoining residential properties and public rights of way.

Wall mounted lighting on facades that are visible from public right of ways shall utilize lighting fixtures that light down only, instead of wallpak fixtures that can cause night glare to off site locations. Exterior electrical outlets at commercial building canopies are encouraged to allow for seasonal holiday lighting.

Building façade lighting should be subtle in nature and should ideally be accomplished with upward directed landscape lighting that filters through, or back-lights, landscape plantings onto building walls.

## **6. SITE DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS**

### ***a) Landscape Design***

The landscape, hardscape, site accessories, and associated finished grading design for the development must be prepared by a NYS licensed Landscape Architect. The final landscape, hardscape, site accessories and finish grading plans shall bear the seal and signature of a Landscape Architect.

### ***b) Natural Features***

Important natural characteristics or site features should be preserved and enhanced, where possible. Important features may include, but are not limited to trees and vegetation, topography, watercourses and views.

### ***c) Exterior Space Design***

Exterior space design is an integral component of good site design. Well designed exterior spaces will soften the impact of a building on a site and help it appear to "belong" there. Opportunities to embellish pedestrian gathering spaces with compatible landscape accessories are encouraged. An exterior space design concept should be implemented on each project that complements surrounding building forms & traffic patterns. Concepts may include design elements such as feature planters, benches, trellises, gateways, fountains, trees, plantings or gardens, special lighting, display kiosks or clock towers.

Special attention should be taken in the design and coordination of landscape treatments of exterior spaces around and between buildings to allow them to be inviting and attractive to pedestrian users. Landscape planting, pedestrian paving treatments and landscape accessories are likely to be requested along primary building facades visible from public right of ways.

### ***d) Pedestrian Walkways and Hardscape Design***

Pedestrian walkway pavements should be subdivided by aesthetically arranged control and expansion joint patterns. The Board encourages the use of colored unit pavers for incorporation into the overall hardscape design layout to

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provide pattern and color variation to enhance other more standard paving materials and to accent the location of landscape accessories such as tree grates, tree guards, planters, plant beds, trash containers and bicycle stands. Special variations in paving patterns should be designed where walkways meet or change directions.

**e) *Finish Grading & Earth Forms***

Finish grading plans are expected to incorporate soft, irregular, undulating, landscaped, earth forms to enhance pavement and plant locations and to provide an appealing visual transition between parking areas and both streets and neighboring parcels.

*Earth forms* should be interconnected into contiguous groups, the tops of which should vary from 12 inches to 24 inches from each other. If desired, the slope of grades used in defining earth forms can be gradual enough to allow for the mowing of sloped surfaces. Visual screening at least 3 ft. high, either by the use of earth forms or a combination of earth forms and planting, will be required to screen the lower portions of parked vehicles in parking lots from public right-of-ways.

The Board encourages the incorporation of curved edges and surfaces, where possible, as accents in the layout of pedestrian walkways, planting beds, finish grade contours, ponds and drainage swales to achieve a more natural appearance. Drainage ponds and swales with straight edges should be avoided.

**f) *Site Furniture & Accessories***

Site furniture & accessories should be located along pedestrian walks and gathering areas. Design elements such as benches, trash containers, tree grates, tree guards, planters, trellises & bollards are inviting and add to the "pedestrian friendly" appeal of exterior spaces. The style and color of these elements should be selected to not only match each other but should match pedestrian walkway light poles and fixtures.

**g) *Plant Design***

The Board expects that the color and type of plants will be taken into account by the landscape architect to achieve the best overall design results, including the need to have all-season benefit from plants used as visual screening devices. The variety and location of landscaping should be appropriate for the environmental conditions, use, purpose and care that it will be subjected to.

All landscape plant material must meet the American Standard for nursery stock quality. All plant material must be No. 1 or heavy specimen quality grade.

**h) *Plant Warranty***

Landscape plant material shall be installed and maintained to insure growth. Plants that don't survive during the first 2 years of planting shall be replaced with variety and size to match the original plant material.

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*i) Plant Sizes*

The following is a list of minimum sizes for the following plant groups at the time of planting:

Evergreen (conifer) 6-8'

Evergreen (ornamental) 24-48"

Broadleaf Evergreens 24-48"

Deciduous trees (shade) 22-3" caliper

Deciduous trees (ornamental flowering) 2-22" caliper

Deciduous Shrubs 18-48" or 2-3 gal.

Herbaceous Perennials 1-3 gal.

Ornamental Grass 1-3 gal.

Ground Cover 2 year 22" pot.

The Board may require larger plant sizes, such as 12-14 ft. high conifers and deciduous trees, to mitigate expected visual conditions that, in its view, may be inherent in the proposed location, design or use of the site.

*j) Site Lighting*

The Board has a preference for metal halide lamped site lighting (as opposed to sodium vapor lamps). However, the Board may require sodium vapor lighting in areas where it deems appropriate to maintain a lighting color that matches existing adjacent or nearby parcels. Exterior building lighting is expected to have the same light color as the site light fixtures.

*k) Pedestrian Walkway Lighting*

Pedestrian walkway lighting should be appropriate in style with the design character of the space. The **bottom** of pedestrian walkway **fixture lenses** is expected to be 14 ft. above surrounding grade. Raised concrete pole bases should be adjusted in height based on the style of pole base. Many traditional style light poles should not have any raised base. They should be set at the surrounding walk elevation. It is expected that special attention will be taken to select and coordinate a pole and fixture color that matches site furniture and accessory colors.

*l) Parking Area Lighting*

Parking lot light poles should not exceed 24 ft. above surrounding grade in smaller parking areas of less than 200 cars or 30 ft. above grade in larger parking areas of 200 or more. However, the Board may require lower light pole heights in larger parking areas where it deems the character of the project's design or the character of the neighborhood would be adversely affected by higher pole heights.

**7. SITE AND BUILDING SIGNAGE**

Sign graphics and lighting shall be designed to allow for clear communication, but

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should otherwise not be over lighted. Signs with exterior illumination shall not glare into vehicular or pedestrian traffic areas.

Signs with interior illumination should have only sign letters and logos lighted, not sign backgrounds. This concept applies to all site and building signage, including traffic entrance & exit signs, if lighted. Sign lighting shall not glare to off-site locations. The luminance of all sign lighting shall be submitted for Board review along with the manufacturer's catalogue cuts of the proposed signs.

Site identification signage should be limited to monument signs not to exceed 6 ft. above surrounding grade, where permitted by zoning.

Building mounted signs with interior illumination should not have exposed "cabinets" or transformer raceways, but should, for example, have "channel" style letters with transformers and raceways concealed behind building facades.

"Corporate branding," including corporate text, symbols, graphics and other attention-getting devices, which are located on buildings, structures, and equipment that extend beyond the legal limits of sign areas permitted by zoning, are discouraged.

a) Corporate branding, whose scale and interior location is readily visible from a public right of way through exterior building glazing, is discouraged.

b) The placing of extensive corporate branding on equipment, which is visible from the public right-of-way, is discouraged. Examples of such equipment include, but are not limited to, devices such as fuel pump cabinets and promotional product or services graphics.

## **8. APPLICANT SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

In addition to the standard engineering information required for the Site Plan Review process, the Board expects that the following will be provided for its review and consideration:

### ***a) Conceptual/Sketch Plan Review***

Both conceptual site and conceptual building designs should be incorporated into the applicant's plans, beginning with the applicant's concept, or sketch plan, review submission. The applicant is encouraged to have a pre-submission planning conference with at least one member of the Board, a staff representative and the Board's designated design consultant to review conceptual graphics.

Submit graphic information that communicates the general character of the proposed site development. All drawings should have a scale that is indicated on the drawing, along with the direction of north, and each sheet numbered and dated.

The design character of the building(s) should be shown in plan along with a 3-D concept sketch indicating anticipated size, shapes, materials and relationship to the site.

It is the applicant's responsibility to clearly communicate the 3-dimensional design intent of the proposed development.

Landscape ideas and exterior space concepts should be graphically communicated. Subsequent submissions should include sufficient drawings, photos

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and text to clearly and thoroughly communicate the complete design intent of the project, to the satisfaction of the Board.

**b) *Preliminary Site Plan Review***

This submission shall include, but not be limited to the following: Provide building plans and elevation drawn to scale that are numbered and dated. Provide a first floor plan. All building elevations should be shown in color. Three dimensional representations of primary building facades should be included that include roof forms, method of screening visible building equipment, trash and loading areas. These drawings shall indicate color and material representations. The Board may request a site profile incorporating a key building profile, an additional 3-D rendition, or even a mass model, if necessary, to fully understand the three dimensional characteristics of proposed buildings. Landscape drawings shall include the following: plant list with height above grade noted for each type of plant, site furniture, site accessories, pedestrian walkway lighting, tree base outlets and landscape up-lighting shown on 1/8" scale hardscape plans. *Hardscape* plans shall include representative pedestrian paving surface areas, score line and expansion joint patterns, dimensioned geometry of edges, patterns, locations, layout of colored concrete or brick paver areas or accent patterns, pedestrian walkway light poles and other site accessory locations.

**c) *Final Site Plan Review***

This submission shall include, but not be limited to, the following: Provide final design drawings that include final design refinements that incorporate all comments from prior submissions. Provide colored elevations of all building elevations, including equipment screening, location roof penetrations such as pipe vents, HVAC grilles, building-mounted lights, signs and canopies. Clearly identify all materials and colors, including exterior soffit materials, gravel stop color, rooftop unit cabinet color, etc. Provide colored exterior elevations of all sides of building and provide three dimensional renditions, if requested by the Board. Provide a first floor plan and a roof plan. Provide elevations of exterior screen walls.

Provide a *hardscape* plan at least 1/8"=1'-0" in scale indicating: pedestrian paving materials, surface patterns, control and expansion joint locations, key dimensions and location of landscape accessories, and a schedule of all site accessories indicating type and quantity of accessory.

This plan shall include all dimensioning necessary for accurate layout of all paving including control and expansion joint locations.

Finish grading plans, *hardscape* plans, and landscape planting plans shall be prepared and sealed by a licensed NYS Landscape Architect.

Provide a written list of all exterior building materials and their colors. Provide samples of each exterior material as requested by the Board. A sample of glass will be required if anything other than clear exterior glass is being proposed.

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Provide catalog cuts with color selections of site lighting fixtures and landscape accessories including: fencing, tables, benches, trash containers, tree grates, tree guards, pedestrian walkway light fixtures, landscape lighting fixtures, bollards, fountains, clocks and bicycle racks, etc. Provide material and color samples of unit paving materials. Lighting fixture submittals shall indicate type of lamp and luminance per fixture.

Submit a signage package including drawings to scale of all signage on site, including building-mounted signs, site signage including vehicular traffic control signs and monument signs. This material shall clearly indicate graphic layout, colors, type of illumination, and lamp luminance.

Final landscape drawings shall include a plant schedule that clearly keys each plant type to the site. This schedule shall include the Latin name, common name, plant group, height above grade, ball size, quantity and caliper required. See landscape section for additional requirements.

## **9. CHANGES SUBSEQUENT TO PLANNING BOARD APPROVAL**

Any significant design changes made to a project subsequent to Final Site Plan Approval are subject to Planning Board review and approval during the design phase and prior to the start of work. These include, but are not limited to: changes to building facades, style, building design components, materials, colors, signage; and the addition or the relocation of mechanical or electrical equipment that is visible from the public right of way, without Board approved locations and screening devices.

## **10. TERMINOLOGY**

For the purposes of this document, the following shall serve to clarify the meaning of special terminology included in this text:

- a) *Earth Forms:*** This term describes the 3-dimensional character of subtle earth mounds or depressions which may be used to aesthetically enhance the locations of site plan features such as pedestrian walkways, pedestrian gathering areas, paved parking areas, locations of featured plant groupings, signage or hardscape elements, among other things. Irregular earth forms are preferred. This term refers to visually soft, curvilinear earth shapes that undulate in both the vertical and horizontal planes.
- b) *Hardscape:*** This term describes that portion of a finished landscape design which includes, but is not limited to, the dimensioned layout and configuration of pedestrian paving materials and patterns; the location of paving score lines and expansion joints; the location of landscape accessories including but not limited to bicycle racks, tables, benches, trash containers, tree grates, tree guards, bollards, trellises, gazebos and decorative walkway lighting; and the location of raised planters, curbed plant beds and decorative fountains. Hardscape elements are any of the above listed

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landscape accessories that are used to enhance the overall landscape design.

- c) ***Pedestrian Friendly:*** This term describes the positive aesthetic characteristics of exterior space design that are likely to be inviting, interesting and enjoyable from either pedestrian or vehicular view locations. Design components that impact on the pedestrian friendly and pedestrian scale of spaces include: pedestrian paving materials and their colors, textures and patterns; plant material including seasonal variety and color; subtle earth forming; size and character of pedestrian signage; use of park-like landscape accessories such as plant beds, benches, tree grates, tree guards, bollards and decorative lighting, to mention a few. It is important to note that pedestrian scale spaces can and should be visually inviting to passing motorists as well.
- d) ***Sense of Place:*** This term describes the ambiance of exterior spaces that are designed to have a *personality* that is inviting and attractive to pedestrians. Such spaces are best located between parking areas and building entrance facades, between buildings or between building wings. The observation can be made that many of us spend our lives in places that leave us feeling as though we are only on-our-way to other places. Thoughtful designs of exterior spaces that have a positive "strong sense of place" are likely to attract us to linger and enjoy the surroundings with experiences that add to the quality of our daily lives. Examples of places with a strong "sense of place" that have traditionally enhanced communities are pedestrian plazas, courtyards, historic village streets, old town squares and tree lined walkways.

\*\*\*\* ***As part of Final Site Plan Approval, the Town of Webster Planning Board requires that, at the completion of the project, the Developer attain certification by one or more NYS Licensed Design Professionals that the completed project is in compliance with the documents of Final Site Plan Approval. The Professional(s) shall certify portions of the work that are in compliance by use of professional (wet) seal(s) and signature(s). If portions of the work are incomplete or are in non-compliance with the documents of Final Site Plan Approval, the Professional(s) shall provide a detailed written description of the***

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***incomplete or non-compliant portions of the work for Town use.***

Project name & site location: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Professional Licensee (Typed or printed):  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 1) ***Finish grading and drainage is in compliance:***  
Licensee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) ***Pedestrian paving configurations, score line patterns & materials are in compliance:***  
Licensee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) ***Landscape planting quantity & size, including heights above grade are in compliance:***  
Licensee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ***Landscape up-lighting & tree base outlet locations, wattages & quantities are in compliance:***  
Licensee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ***Landscape accessories: types, styles and quantities are in compliance.***  
(i.e.: tree grates, tree guards, trash containers, bollards, fencing, planters, benches, tables, etc.)  
Licensee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) ***Site lighting poles and fixture styles, color, quantities, locations and heights are in compliance:***  
Licensee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) ***Exterior building lighting for fixture type & luminance:***  
Licensee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) ***Exterior building design(s) are in compliance:***  
Licensee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) ***Licensee (wet) seal:***

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